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ABSTRACT

Introducing the reasons for the survey with a quotation from the Committee for Economic Development's "Economic Education in the School," 1961, this report provides a narrative and tabular summary of two questionnaires administered to elementary and secondary (7-12) social studies teachers in the PROBE area. One generalization from the results is that "the present status of the problem is still near critical for the teachers involved." The questionnaire sent to 265 elementary teachers (168 responding) asked about their preparation for teaching economic concepts in grades K-6. A majority had no economics principles courses, and felt a need for inservice or college credit courses and teacher and student materials. 125 secondary teachers were surveyed (84 responding) and indicated greater preparation in economics; however, only 42% felt prepared to teach a 12th grade economics course. The majority also felt a need for more preparation, and teacher and student materials. Additional information is available in ED 040 099.

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An Inventory of Needs of

Teachers of Economics in Catskill Area Schools

Prepared under the Auspices of the Catskill Area School Study Council for

Project PROBE

December, 1967

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Project PROBE

A Project for the Advancement
of Creativity in Education

PL 89-10 Elementary
and Secondary Education Act

Sponsored by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services
Sole Supervisory District of Otsego County
in cooperation with the Catskill Area School Study Council

135 Old Main
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Oneonta, New York 13820

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The Need for Better Economic Education

The subject of economic literacy and economic education came under close scrutiny in 1960 when the American Economic Association and the Committee for Economic Development announced jointly the creation of a National Task Force on Economic Education "to describe the minimum understanding of economics essential for good citizenship and attainable by high school students, the main object being to provide helpful guidelines for high school teachers, administrators, and school boards."[1] The problem that economic illiteracy presents to a democratic society and a spelling out of the failure of the school to provide economic education was identified in the Task Force Report:

> Economic understanding is essential if we are to meet our responsibilities as citizens and as participants in a basically private enterprise economy. We face economic problems in our day-to-day lives at every turn - in both public and private affairs - and at every level - national, state, and local. Moreover, the economic role of government and the complexity of the economic issues with which it necessarily deals have grown enormously in the past fifty years.
>
> Depression brings unemployment and personal disaster to millions. What should be done? Give unemployment relief? Decrease taxes and create a government deficit so as to increase private purchasing power? Reduce wages and other costs? Just wait?
>
> Needs for more and better schools mount. Can we afford them? If so, who should pay for them? Should we borrow to pay the cost or enact new taxes? What would be the effect of new income, sales, or property taxes on private spending by consumers and businesses?
>
> Foreign competition threatens the markets of American firms. Should American tariffs be raised? Is the answer lower American costs through increased efficiency and restraint on wage increases? Broadly, are international trade and lending good or bad for America?
>
> Electronic computers and scientific advances bring automation that eliminates both unskilled and skilled jobs. Who gains and who loses from such changes? Should labor unions oppose them, insist on slow introduction to minimize transitional unemployment and description, or welcome them? What is the interest of consumer and others in the economy?
>
> Such questions could be multiplied indefinitely. The issues fill our daily papers and our daily lives. Yet the vast majority of students graduate from our high schools without the economic understanding

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[1] Committee for Economic Development, Economic Education in the Schools, Summary of the Report of the National Task Force on Economics Education (1961), p. 4.

necessary to comprehend such problems and to reach reasoned, independent judgements on them. While excellent teaching of economics occurs in some schools, very few high school students ever take a course in economics; textbooks and other teaching materials are all too often inadequate; and most teachers in the social studies have insufficient preparation in economics to teach this subject effectively. Apparently only about five per cent of all high school students take a separate course in economics. Most get what little exposure they do receive in courses in "Problems in American Democracy" or American History, where the attention to economic reasoning and economic institutions is largely descriptive and all too often dry and sterile. Little attention is generally given to helping students to think for themselves about the big economic problems the nation faces today. All too often teachers use their own points of view to give the students "answers" to the economic problems raised, rather than leading students to independent analysis and judgments. Economic pressure groups flood the schools with pamphlets and propaganda, some helpfully objective and some narrowly self-seeking.

Nor can we count on the college to fill this gap in our economic understanding. Less than half of our future citizens go on to college from high school, and only a quarter of those who do ever take a course in economics in college. Thus, for the foreseeable future we must rely on the schools to provide training in economic understanding for most future citizens.[1]

The wide distribution and circulation of this report brought almost immediate response. Professional economists began to recognize their responsibility and the American Economic Association reconstituted its committee on Economic Education under the chairmanship of one of its most respected members, George Leland Bach. The committee's mandate was "to develop a positive program to help improve economic understanding."[2]

The Joint Council on Economic Education, a pioneer in the economic education movement, expanded its activities as it found a more receptive public. Emphasizing the importance of having educators and economists work together it sponsored numerous workshops to identify what problems existed and the importance of having the two professions work together. Numerous state and regional councils were organized throughout the entire country, each trying to serve the needs of school districts in its area.

Recognition was soon given the need to introduce economic concepts throughout the entire curriculum and from grades K-12. The Joint Council helped to establish twenty-nine projects in twenty-five states in curriculum development

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[1]Committee for Economic Development, Economic Education in the Schools, Summary of the Report of the National Task Force on Economic Education (1961), p. 6-7.

[2]Haley, Bernard F., Experiments in the Teaching of Basic Economics, Joint Council on Economic Education (1966), p. iii.

under the title "Developmental Economic Education Program" (DEEP). The Calvin K. Kazanjian Foundation provided a generous grant to encourage creative teachers to develop courses of study, programs, and units of all levels. The inclusion of economics under the Federal grants made to institutions and provided for teachers at all levels in additional recognition of the importance of the problem and the response to the felt need.

New York state reacted quickly to the Task Force Report. The New York State Council on Economic Education was organized and given immediate recognition by Dr. James E. Allen, Jr., the Commissioner of Education. Five regional councils and four regional centers have been set up, all working to improve economic education in the areas they serve.

The State Education Department now requires economic concepts to be taught at every grade level, K-12, and has recently developed a 12th grade syllabus in economics. Professors from thirty colleges involved in teaching preparation have been brought together each year to discuss how they may improve their introductory course to better serve those who will be teaching economic concepts in the schools.[1] Inservice courses, workshops, library material, newsletters, and research have all helped to improve the economic literacy of teachers and students in the state.

In spite of this impressive response of New York state to the Task Force Report, serious shortcomings exist. Statistics compiled for the academic year 1965-66 by the New York State Education Department for private and public schools, excluding New York City public schools, show only 45% offering economics as an elective.[2] The percentage would be much lower for public schools alone, where only one third of the graduated will have taken a course in economics. Of 174 respondents to a questionnaire prepared by the New York State Council on Economic Education who were teaching a separate 12th grade course in economics, only 14% had a major in economics and only 4.4% had a minor.

The most immediate and critical problem to be met in New York state seems to be to prepare teachers at all levels to meet the changing social studies curriculum with its greatly expanded emphasis on economics. This will require the efficient use of all resources that can be mustered, with extra demands made on those with the knowledge and experience in the field of economic education.

The Analysis of Teacher Needs in the PROBE Area

In preparation for preparing the economic component of Project PROBE, the economics consultants prepared and administered a comprehensive and complex questionnaire to determine if their pessimistic presumptions about the general economic training of area teachers were justified.

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[1]New York State Council on Economic Education, Handbook, 1967-68, pp. 3-5.

[2]Statistics supplied by New York State Education Department, Bureau of Social Studies, Mildred McChesney, Chief, 1966.

A detailed questionnaire was sent to all secondary social studies teachers, and a sample of 1/3 of the teachers in grades K-6 in May, 1967. The results of this study confirm the generalizations emerging from the report of the state of the problem nationally and in New York state; namely that economic education was in a tragic condition at the time of the Task Force Report, that there has been a major response to the report, and finally that the present status of the problem is still near critical for the teachers involved.

Slightly better than 50% responding (51.3%) indicated they are now offering a separate twelfth grade course in economics, 75% of these were started in the last two years. An additional 20% of the respondents plan to start a course by September, 1968.

All secondary social studies teachers in the PROBE primary service area were sent questionnaires (125) and 66% (84) responded. However, not all questions were answered by those who returned the questionnaire. Frequently the reason was stated that the responding teacher was not responsible for the economics offerings.

Of the 265 questionnaires sent out to a random sample of teachers K-6 in the PROBE primary service area, 63% (168) responded. Not all questions were answered by those returning the questionnaire. The response was somewhat higher than that indicated above, but several questionnaires were returned after all statistical analysis had been made.

The statistical analysis in all cases were made on the numbers responding to each of the questions asked, rather than on the total returns.

All secondary teachers responding indicated a need for a separate twelfth grade course, with 43% feeling that it should be required for at least some students. These responses indicate that teachers in this area have reacted to the recent economic education movement and in some concrete way (starting separate economics courses).

In spite of this recognition for the need for a separate twelfth grade course, 58% feel they do not have an adequate understanding of economics to teach such a course. 41% or more responded that they knew little or nothing about such economic concepts as national income accounting, income determination and compensatory countercyclical action, all listed in the tentative syllabus for the 12th grade economics course. Every area or concept in macroeconomics identified, with the exception of business cycles, elicited more than a 50% response for help. In the case of modern fiscal and monetary policy, 74% identified a great need for help. 43% felt they critically needed "an inservice and/or college credit course stressing economic concepts, tools analysis and policy" with another 22% identifying their need as slightly less.

It may be pointed out here the very crucial need felt by teachers for selected materials. Better than two thirds of those responding identified at least "great value" for such materials as acetate overlays, charts, graphs and diagrams, readings pointing up state and national problems, test for evaluating knowledge and concepts, inventories of local resources useful for an economics class, for economic education literature, for visitations to schools by economists, and for coordination of field trips. Of the 18 items listed to help teachers, not one was regarded as of little or no value to more than one quarter of those responding elementary teachers.

The survey made of teachers in grade K-6 showed a similar pattern in their need for help and, as might be expected, a more inadequate background. Only 45% of those responding had had a principles course in economics and, of that number, only 22% had a two semester course. Less than 2% had taken a non-college credit seminar or workshop in economics. Of the 19 economic concepts or areas listed, 16 were identified by more than 50% of the respondents as "know little about it" or "know nothing about it." Approximately 50% of those responding to questions dealing with their need for some kind of inservice and/or college credit course answered affirmatively. Of the 13 different types of materials that a professional staff might prepare for use in economic education, all were considered of "great value" or "greatest value" by more than 50% of the respondents. In 6 of these, more than 70% identified at least their great value.

The need for Courses and Teaching Materials

In response to the question of the need for an inservice and/or college credit course (question No. 4, K-6, and question No. 8, 7-12), four types of courses were suggested. Teachers in K-6 showed a somewhat greater interest in a methods and materials oriented course, while those teaching in grades 7-12 were somewhat more inclined towards concepts, tools, analysis and policy. However, the demand for any course was apparent. Approximately half of the elementary school teachers wanted some kind of course, while about two-thirds of those teaching in grades 7-12 wanted a course. Taking all responses collectively, no significant difference was shown for "critical" or near critical" need combined for any single type course.

In response to how such a course might be offered a preference was shown for (1) educational television with correspondence course features and workshops, (2) summer courses, and (3) extension courses.

The questionnaires reveal clearly the kind of materials and services that teachers wish.

For grades 7-12, two-thirds of the respondents indicated a great value for:

1. T.V. tapes for learning specific lessons or concepts.
2. Acetate overlays for overhead projectors.
3. A book of charts, graphs, and diagrams for explaining economic concepts.
4. A set or readings identifying state and national problems.
5. Tests for evaluating knowledge and concepts.
6. An inventory of local resources.
7. An inventory of economic education literature that might be borrowed.
8. Visits to local schools by economists.
9. Coordination of field trips.

For grades K-6 two-thirds of the respondents indicated a great need for:

1. Bibliography of movies and filmstrips that contribute to the learning of economic concepts.
2. Outline of suggested economic concepts suitable for the elementary student.
3. Suggestions for field trips to promote economic learning in the elementary school, (e.g. local farm, post office, industries, grocery, bakery, department store, bank, etc.).

4. A manual of games, stories, plays, dramatizations, to promote economic learnings in the classroom.
5. A manual of classroom displays and suggested sources.
6. Suggested techniques for incorporating the economic dimension into the total curriculum program of the elementary school.
7. Use of the problems approach and the discovery method in solving real life economic problems relating to elementary children.

A. Status of Teacher Preparation for Teaching Economic Concepts in Grades K-6

Respondents: 168 Elementary School Teachers
265 Questionnaires Sent
63% Responding

Questions and Tabulated Response:

1. Have you had an Economics Principles Course? Yes 45% No 55%
How many semesters? one 78% two 22%

2. What non-college credit work have you had in Economics?
1.25% had workshop or seminar

3. Listed below are the major areas and concepts in Economics. Indicate how well you feel you know each of these by placing the appropriate number in Column 1. Let (1) indicate thorough understanding, (2) understanding well enough to teach it, (3) somewhat in doubt, (4) know little about it, and (5) know nothing about it. Indicate by placing the appropriate number in Column II how important it is that you receive help in these areas. Let (1) stand for greatest need, (2) next, (3) next, (4) little need, and (5) no need.

		Column I		Column II	
		Greatest Knowledge 1&2	Least Knowledge 4&5	Greatest Need 1&2	Least Need 4&5
1.	Economics as a discipline	21%	55%	41%	38%
2.	Basic Economic problems	35%	45%	40%	32%
3.	An economics system	26%	47%	43%	32%
4.	Models	7%	77%	33%	46%
5.	Circular flow of Economics activity	19%	64%	38%	44%
6.	Production possibility	20%	55%	33%	41%
7.	The Market mechanism				
	a. Conditions of competition	27%	56%	39%	43%
	b. Supply and Demand	31%	49%	38%	43%
8.	Functional distribution	16%	63%	37%	43%
9.	Public finance	16%	62%	32%	47%
10.	Consumer economics	22%	58%	48%	41%
11.	National income accounting	5%	75%	33%	48%
12.	National Income Determination				
	a. Equilibrium	5%	82%	32%	52%
	b. Multiplier	7%	74%	36%	51%
13.	Business Cycles	14%	67%	38%	42%
14.	Money and money creation	21%	55%	40%	38%
15.	Banking and Monetary policy	16%	67%	39%	42%
16.	Compensatory countercyclical action	5%	83%	34%	48%
17.	International trade and finance	6%	74%	36%	42%
18.	Comparative systems	9%	73%	41%	38%
19.	Economic problems	23%	56%		

4. Indicate by placing the appropriate number next to each of the following listed below, their importance to you. Place a (1) for those which are most critically needed, (2) next, (3) next, (4) marginal, and (5) for those not needed. Consider each item separately.

Critically Needed 1&2		
49%	A.	An inservice and/or college credit course stressing economic concepts, tools, analysis, and policy.
53%	B.	An inservice and/or college credit course stressing methods and materials for teaching economics.
39%	C.	An inservice and/or college credit course using the problems approach.
50%	D.	An inservice and/or college credit course combining everything listed in (A) through (C).

5. Indicate by placing the appropriate number which method you would prefer for taking the courses (A), (B), (C), or (D) listed in Question 4. Place a (1) for the method you most like, (2) next, (3) next, (4), (5).

First Preference 1&2		
60%	A.	Educational television with correspondence course features and workshops at local schools which would yield both inservice and college credit.
42%	B.	Three week summer course at State University College, Oneonta.
30%	C.	Six week summer course at State University College, Oneonta.
38%	D.	Extension courses on campus.
61%	E.	Extension courses off campus.
11%	F.	Saturday classes.
45%	G.	Non-credit workshops.
29%	H.	Regular correspondence courses offered by S.U.N.Y. for college credit.

6. The Economics staff, working with PROBE, is hoping to prepare materials to help both the teacher and student. Indicate the value you would place upon each of the following by placing the appropriate number next to it. Let (1) indicate greatest value, (2) great value, (3) some value, (4) little value, and (5) no value. Numbers may be used as many times as necessary. Column I is for value to teachers, and Column II for value to students.

	Column I Greatest Need Teachers 1&2	Column II Greatest Need Students 1&2
A. Bibliography of movies and filmstrips that contribute to the learning of economic concepts.	73%	48%

4. (continued)		Column I Greatest Need Teachers 1&2	Column II Greatest Need Students 1&2
B.	A description of techniques in the use of flat pictures, charts, flannelboards and other one dimension visuals to develop economic concepts.	62%	44%
C.	An inventory of resources personnel available for elementary classes engaged in economic education.	63%	45%
D.	A description of techniques for evaluating economic understandings, attitudes, and behavior.	56%	29%
E.	A bibliography of economic education literature relating to the elementary school that may be borrowed from the PROBE center.	63%	30%
F.	Outline of suggested economic concepts suitable for the elementary student.	80%	46%
G.	Suggestions for field trips to promote economic learning in the elementary school, (e.g. local industries, grocery, bakery, department store, farm, post office, bank, etc.)	77%	68%
H.	A manual of games, stories, plays, dramatizations to promote economic learnings in the classroom.	74%	64%
I.	A manual of classroom displays and suggested sources.	79%	56%
J.	Directions for role playing techniques to promote economic learning.	55%	48%
K.	A bibliography of trade books relating to the economic world and the elementary child.	54%	39%
L.	Suggested techniques for incorporating the economic dimension into the total curriculum program of the elementary school.	66%	34%
M.	Use of the problems approach and the discovery method involving real life economic problems relating to elementary children.	73%	59%

B. Status of Teacher Preparation and Experience for Teaching Economics as a Separate 12th Grade Course.

Respondents: 84 Secondary Social Studies Teachers
125 Questionnaires sent
66% Responding

Questions and Tabulated Response:

1. Is your school presently offering a separate 12th grade course in Economics?
Yes 51.3% No 48.7%

A. If yes, when was it first offered? 74% started within the last two years
B. If no, do you expect to offer it? 20% more will start courses by 1968

2. How important do you feel a separate economics course is for high school students? All responding agreed there was a need for separate 12th grade economics course.

A. Should be required for all students. 20%
B. Should be required for some students. 23%
C. Should be an elective. 57%
D. No need to offer it as a separate course. _____

3. Have you had an Economics Principles course? Yes 86.8% No _____
How many semesters? One _____ Two 74.6%

4. What non-college credit work have you had in Ecomomics? 25.3% had workshops or seminars.

5. Have you seen the tentative syllabus for "Grade 12: Advanced Ecomomics"?
Yes 51%

6. Do you feel your understanding of Economics is adequate enough to teach a 12th grade course in Economics? Yes 42.2%

7. Below are listed the major areas and concepts in Economics. Indicate how well you feel you know each of these by placing the appropriate number in Column I. Let (1) indicate thorough understanding, (2) understanding well enough to teach it, (3) somewhat in doubt, (4) know little about it, and (5) know nothing about it. Indicate by placing the appropriate number in Column II how important it is that you receive help in these areas. Let (1) stand for greatest need, (2) next, (3) next, (4) little need, and (5) no need.

	Column I		Column II	
	Greatest Knowledge 1&2	Least Knowledge 4&5	Greatest Need 1&2	Least Need 4&5
1. Economics as a discipline	65%	35%	29%	42%
2. Basic economic problems	79%	4%	28%	44%
3. An economic system	67%	12%	33%	35%

7. (continued)

	Column I		Column II	
	Greatest Knowledge 1&2	Least Knowledge 4&5	Greatest Need 1&2	Least Need 4&5
4. Models	42%	31%	51%	20%
5. Circular flow of economic activity	50%	24%	48%	26%
6. Production possibility	46%	21%	45%	29%
7. The market mechanism	67%	10%	35%	33%
7a. Conditions of competition	71%	8%	32%	38%
7b. Supply and Demand	72%	11%	29%	46%
8. Functional distribution	30%	33%	63%	16%
9. Public Finance	37%	27%	62%	20%
10. Consumer economics	57%	20%	50%	32%
11. National Income accounting	26%	43%	69%	17%
12. National Income determination	29%	40%	73%	12%
a. Equilibrium	29%	43%	67%	15%
b. Multiplier	31%	41%	66%	19%
13. Business Cycles	63%	8%	40%	35%
14. Money and Money creation	53%	14%	56%	26%
15. Banking and monetary policy	37%	21%	61%	17%
16. Compensatory countercyclical action	24%	51%	74%	12%
17. International trade and finance	32%	27%	61%	20%
18. Comparative systems	51%	22%	55%	34%
19. Economic problems	62%	8%	37%	33%

8. Indicate by placing the appropriate number next to each of the following listed below, their importance to you. Place a (1) for those which are most critically needed, (2) next, (3) next, (4) marginal, and (5) for those not needed. Consider each item separately.

Greatest Importance 1&2	Not Needed 4&5		
65%	12%	A.	An inservice and/or college credit course stressing economic concepts, tools, analysis, and policy.
62%	19%	B.	An inservice and/or college credit course stressing methods and materials for teaching economics.
66%	17%	C.	An inservice and/or college credit course using the problems approach.
51%	39%	D.	An inservice and/or college credit course combining everything listed in (A) through (C).

9. Indicate by placing the appropriate number which method you would prefer for taking the courses (A, B, C, or D) listed above. Place a (1) for the method you most like, (2) second preference, (3) third preference, (4) fourth preference, and (5) fifth preference.

First Preference 1&2	Least Preferred 4&5		
34%	55%	A.	Educational television with correspondence course features, and workshops at local schools which would yield both inservice and college credit.
47%	23%	B.	Three-week summer course at State University College, Oneonta.
54%	22%	C.	Six-week summer course at State University College, Oneonta.
52%	25%	D.	Extension courses on campus.
54%	34%	E.	Extension courses off campus.
12%	73%	F.	Saturday classes.
24%	60%	G.	Non-credit workshops.
28%	56%	H.	Regular correspondence courses offered by S.U.N.Y. for college.

10. The Economics staff, working with PROBE, is hoping to prepare materials to help both the teacher and student. Indicate by placing the appropriate number next to each of the following which you consider to be of: (1) greatest value, (2) of great value, (3) some value, (4) little value, (5) no value. Numbers may be used as many times as necessary. Column I is for value to teachers, and Column II for value to students.

		Column I Teachers		Column II Students	
		Greatest Value 1&2	Least Value 4&5	Greatest Value 1&2	Least Value 4&5
A.	T.V. tapes for learning specific lessons or concepts, e.g. expansion of money.	66%	16%	62%	9%
B.	T.V. tapes - panel discussions - dialogue on controversial issues in Economics.	58%	23%	41%	20%
C.	Same as (A) above, but used by individual in a study class.	44%	23%	48%	18%
D.	Same as (B) above, but used by individual in a study class.	46%	23%	44%	22%
E.	Acetate overlays to be used with an overhead projector.	75%	4%	78%	2%
F.	Book of charts, graphs, and diagrams for explaining economic concepts.	77%	7%	80%	8%
G.	Economic statistics for both local area, state and nation.	58%	9%	59%	24%

10. (continued)

	Column I Teachers		Column II Students	
	Greatest Value 1&2	Least Value 4&5	Greatest Value 1&2	Least Value 4&5
H. Economic problems to be used with (G) above.	62%	8%	54%	16%
I. Pictures and movies of local area to point out local economic problems.	50%	17%	57%	19%
J. Set of readings identifying local economic problems.	47%	17%	41%	18%
K. Set of readings identifying state and national problems.	70%	4%	58%	10%
L. Tests for evaluating knowledge and concepts.	68%	12%	61%	16%
M. Tests for identifying attitudes and values.	58%	17%	51%	20%
N. Inventory of local resources (labor leaders, bankers, social security officials, etc.) useful for economic class.	70%	10%	56%	16%
O. Inventory of economic education literature that may be borrowed from the Economic Education and Research Center at SUCO.	69%	5%	35%	23%
P. Inventory of suggested research problems for students in our region.	64%	9%	11%	13%
Q. Visits to local schools by economists.	80%	7%	5%	5%
R. Coordination of field trips for schools in the area, particularly to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, New York Stock Exchange, and several commodity markets.	78%	4%	73%	4%

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CEC CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT CENTER

Norwich, New York